(b) the maximum average age and emoluments/service conditions of these workers;

(c) the common diseases afflicting these workers;

(d) whether Government intend to promote necessary health care schemes to them through NGOs; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) to (e) Most of the salt workers numbering about 1 lakh are concentrated mainly in the coastal areas of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamilnadu in addition to desert areas of Rajasthan & Gujarat. The salt season is mainly from September/October to May/June every year. During the remaining period, salt workers are normally employed in agriculture & otheroccupations. No data is available on maximum average age of salt worker. Amongst other, the inter State Migrant Workers Act, 1979 & the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 are applicable to the salt workers. The rate of minimum wages of semi skilled/salt pan workers fixed in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu is Rs. 97.40 and Rs. 70.46 per day respectively. The occupational health problems are mainly related to skin and eyes, but other common diseases are not diffeent from those living in similar socio-economic conditions. Gum boots and sun glasses are provided by most of the employers to protect the workers from these diseases, besides providing temporary shelters at the worksites. Besides, the Salt Commissioner, Government of India who is running various schemes for the benefit of salt workers such as that relating to drinking water, some of the Stae Governments are also running schemes such as Group Insurance Schemes for salt pan workers, Balwadis, Kacha/pucca Quarter scheme, eye camps, health camps, etc. At present, there is no proposal under consideration of the Ministry of Labour to extend assistance to salt workers through NGOs.

National Child Labour Project Centres

5335. SHRI C. O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the number of National Child Labour Projects Centres setup by Government so far to rehabilitate the Children;

(b) whether it is a fact that these centres are not opened in some districts of various states due to lack of adequate funds.

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) The Government of India has been implementing the Scheme of National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs). The major activity under the NCLP is running special schools/centres for rehabilitation of children withdrawn from work through non-formal education, vocational training, nutrition, health care, stipends etc. So far, 100 National Child Labour Projects have been sanctioned to the 13 Child labour endemic states for coverage of 2.11 lakh children through 3992 special schools/ centres.

(b) to (d) No, Sir, NCLPs are basically sanctioned to the child labour endemic districts for which the concerned state government recommends and sends the proposal for consideration. In the Ninth Plan period, approval was given for sanctioning 100 NCLPs. These 100 NCLPs have since been sanctioned. Action has been initiated for continuation of the Scheme of NCLPs and extending the coverage to all child labour endemic districts in the country in the Tenth Plan period.

Steps to increase employment opportunities in Small Scale Sector

5336. SHRI C. O. POULOSE: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a downward trend in labour employment in small scale sector;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this downward trend is due to Government's policy; and

(d) whether Government propose to take any concrete steps to increase employment opportunities and make condition of labourers better in small scale sectors like beedi, weaving etc.?